

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance

Overview

This module is designed to help caregivers identify interactions that build secure relationships, understand the root of off-track behaviors, and set limits that reach children and restore their ability to think well and manage their lives.

Student outcomes

Student Outcome	Washington State Core Competency-	Corresponding WACs	
		Centers	FHCC
Outcome A The student will identify techniques for building secure relationships, forming the basis for a child's ability to manage his/her own behavior.	VI: Interactions: <u>Providing Individual Guidance</u> 1b. Recognizes that interactions and secure relationships form the basis for development. 1e. Promotes interactions that reflect warmth, sensitivity, nurturance, acceptance and safety. 1g. Provides appropriate supervision of children. 1h. Interacts in a manner reflecting respect for the child's family, self & others <u>Enhancing group experience</u> 1a. Provides continuous adult support and supervision to infants when interacting with each other. 1b. Provides adult support as needed when promoting interactions between multiple toddler-aged children.	WAC 170-295-0070 WAC 170-295-2030 WAC 170-295-2040	WAC 170-296A-6000
Outcome B The student will identify positive responses to children.	VI: Interactions <u>Providing Individual Guidance</u> 1a. Responds positively to children on a daily basis. 1e. Promotes interactions that reflect warmth, sensitivity, nurturance, acceptance and safety. 1g. Provides appropriate supervision of children 1f. Avoids actions that would cause physical and emotional harm. <u>Enhancing group experience</u> 1b. Provides adult support as needed when promoting interactions between multiple toddler-aged children. 1d. Allows infant and toddler caregiving routines to form daily routines. 1e. Handles activities and changes in schedule with clear directions and patience.	WAC 170-295-2030 WAC 170-295-2040	WAC 170-296A-6000

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance

Outcome C The student will recognize off-track behavior and commit to limit setting that supports self-management.	<i>VI: Interactions</i> <i>Providing individual guidance</i> 1a. Responds positively to children on a daily basis. 1i. Uses positive behavior guidance. Enhancing group experience 1e. Handles activities and changes in schedule with clear directions and patience.	WAC 170-295-2030 WAC 170-295-2040	WAC 170-296A-6050 WAC 170-296A-6075 WAC 170-296A-6175
--	--	--------------------------------------	---



Required Reading

1. *Child Care Center Licensing Guidebook* (2nd ed., DEL 2006)
Outcomes A, B and C: Section 3, pp 70-83 (“What behavior management and guidance practices must I have in place?”) and a review of pages 53-70 (“How should staff interact with children?”)
Accessed online at:
<http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/licensing/docs/ChildCareCenterLicensingGuide.pdf>
2. *Washington State Family Home Child Care Licensing Guide* (2nd ed., DEL, 2013)
Section 3 pp. 3 “Child Guidance and Discipline” and 3 pp. 59 “Child Guidance and Discipline (WAC 170-296A-6050).



Recommended resources for instructors

1. Brinamen, C. & Page, F. (November, 2012). Using Relationships to Heal Trauma: Reflective Practice Creates a Therapeutic Preschool. *Young Children*, 67(5), 40-48.
2. Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning.
<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>
 - a. Describing children’s actions; acknowledging positive behaviors
<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout22.pdf>
 - b. Using “Dos” instead of “Don’ts” <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout4.pdf>
 - c. Giving choices <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout15.pdf>
 - d. Promoting positive peer interaction
<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout5.pdf> and
<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout6.pdf>
3. Hand in Hand Parenting. Palo Alto, CA. www.handinhandparenting.org/articles
4. Siegel, D. & Hartzell, M. (2003). *Parenting from the inside out: How a deeper self-understanding can help you raise children who thrive*. New York: Penguin/Putnam.



Opening Activity

Conversation and listening partnerships

Materials Needed

- **Handout 1 “Listening to Build Connection”**
- Optional: Timer or watch

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance

Explain to the students that good caregiving means building connections with children. But what establishes a connection for one person may not for another; it is culturally dependent. One thing that *can* help connect people across cultures is good **listening**. Listening is a tool that people of all ages, races, abilities and languages can use to help establish good communication and trust with one another. Therefore, it is essential that caregivers listen and be attentive to children in order to help establish good connections.

Have the group to pair up. If the number is odd, pair yourself with someone. Explain to the students that in the first part of this exercise, they will have two minutes to have a conversation with their partner about anything they want. Call “time” when the time is up.

Next, distribute **Handout 1** and ask students to read it. For the next part of the exercise, each participant will have a turn at being a talker and a listener. Using the techniques from the handout, have the listener listen attentively without interruption for two minutes. When participants are ready, ask them to begin. When two minutes are up, have them finish their sentence, thank their partner, and switch roles.

Debrief by asking the following questions:

1. How did your Listening Partnership differ from your earlier conversation?
2. When you were the talker, what made you feel that your partner was really listening?
3. How do you think a small child would respond to being listened to without interruption?
4. What kinds of things have you seen children do when they feel they are not being listened to?

Outcome A

The student will identify techniques for building secure relationships, forming the basis for a child’s ability to manage his or her own behavior.



Discussion Questions

1. When people want to make connections....How do they act? How do they talk? How do they listen? In what ways is this culturally embedded?
2. How have you seen others connect with children in ways that you appreciate?
3. What are the guidelines about setting rules?



Presentation

Building connections with children

Social-emotional development provides the foundation for all learning and growth for young children. In this module we will look at how you can support children emotionally

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance

and provide the guidance they need to function well and thrive in your program and the larger world.

Emotionally supportive caregiving means intentionally building connections with children and responding to their actions in positive ways. It also means stepping in to stop off-track behaviors in ways that help them.

People who provide care for children need to build secure, connected relationships with each and every child by being:

- A warm listener who cares about children's expressions and thoughts
- Respectful towards children, parents, and other staff
- Flexible
- Honest and ethical
- Cheerful and creative
- Appreciative of diversity and inclusive in your practices

Caregivers with these attributes are able to build secure relationships with children. These *secure relationships* are vital because:

- Adult-child interactions are the heart of children's programs.
- Secure children can act thoughtfully with kindness and generosity.
- Secure connections allow children to advocate for themselves and others against unfairness and unkindness.
- The more secure children are in their connections, the more they are able to build "executive function" skills of self-management, that allows them to:
 - Think well
 - Use good judgment
 - Plan ahead
 - Remember things
 - Control impulses
 - Pay attention

You are very important in the lives of the children you care for and teach. They need you to:

- Model the ways you want them to behave. For example, don't sit on the tables or toy shelves unless you want children to climb up and sit on them, too.
- Act with generosity, kindness, humor, warmth, flexibility, respect and caring.
- Meet their developmental needs to learn and grow.
- Give them options and choices.

The following strategies can help you with guidance:

- During choice or free play time, have 1 ½ times as many things to do as you have children.

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance

- Verbally give choices, i.e. “The blue one or the red one.” Limit to two choices that are acceptable to you.
- Try offering regular Special Time to each child in your care daily or weekly.
- If a child had a hard time the day before, plan to do a Special Time the moment s/he arrives. Begin their day with a connection to *you*.

Rules

Sometimes adults believe their primary responsibility is to help children learn rules. Rules help children understand what is expected of them, especially school-age children. But all children need to know that an adult is aware of them and will step in and help when they lose track of their behavior. Stopping off-track behavior and *listening* to the upset are *both* necessary so that children can get a chance to think well again to follow rules. It’s easy to forget that the process of learning how to regulate behavior for young children can take a long time. But with the right adult patience and guidance, they can do it!

In the meantime, these simple rules can help caregivers decide when a child needs a limit set:

- We keep ourselves safe.
- We keep each other safe.
- We keep our things safe.

We will talk more about off-track behavior and setting limits later in this module.



Interactive Learning Activity

Adult-to-adult special time

Materials Needed

- **Handout 2 “Special Time”**
- Timer or watch
- Materials to explore, such as:
 - Art materials
 - Jenga, Pick-Up-Sticks or other game
 - Jump ropes, hula hoops, etc.
 - Drums, rattles, musical instruments
 - Scrapbooking stuff
 - Whatever you think your students might enjoy

Arrange materials on a table. Pass around **Handout 2**. Introduce the activity by reading the handout with the students.

Have the group pair up (take a partner yourself if the number is odd.) The student who has “Special Time” first will get to select materials for an activity of her choice from the

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance

table, while her partner has to follow her lead. Encourage those in “Special Time” to actually do what they want to do, rather than pretend to be a child. As long as they are back in the allotted time, they can even leave the room. After 3-5 minutes, call time, and ask the partners to switch roles.

Debrief with the following questions:

- How did you feel in each role?
- How do you think a young child would respond to having a Special Time like this?

Ask students to try offering a child Special Time for 2-4 minutes without interruption before the next class. Ask them to share what they noticed at the start of Module 9.

Outcome B

The student will identify positive responses to children.



Discussion Questions

1. What adult *responses* to a child’s or children’s behavior have you have seen work well?
2. Every program has Guidance Policies. If you were writing them, what would you want them to say?



Presentation

Positive Responses

A **response** is what the caregiver does in answer to a child’s actions. How you respond to children can help them to feel *more* connected or *less* connected. The more secure children are in their connection, the more they are able to build the “executive function” skills of self-management we talked about earlier.

It is important to practice responses to children that help them connect with caregivers, guide their behavior, and prevent problems. Each caregiver develops his/her own style with basic tools in **Handout 3, “Positive Responses that Guide Children.”**

Distribute **Handout 3**. Read together the first two categories, “Describe” and “Do’s instead of Don’ts.” The first item, “Describe Children’s Actions” has many uses. When caregivers describe actions instead of using praise, children receive clear information about the specific actions that the caregiver values. Children then tend to persist in those actions. Children who hear a caregiver describe another child’s actions will often try those same actions themselves. This is a simple way to positively influence what goes on in the classroom. An added bonus is that children also feel really *seen* and cared about by their caregiver, building the connections that are so important to cooperative, involved, and sunny behavior.

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance

Non-examples of positive responses

Rewards and stickers are not on this list. As adults, we hope to be acknowledged and paid for our work. Similarly, children sometimes benefit from receiving a tangible marker showing that they have done something important. Occasionally caregivers may use things like stickers or other treats to reward their efforts. However, it is important to exercise caution and not use this approach as your usual approach.

Children benefit most by learning itself and by contributing to the life of the center or home. Behavior is best guided by actually paying attention to children and giving them cues that help them know what to do and how to behave. So while it is true that children will work for physical evidence of their abilities, rewards can slide over into becoming a way of manipulating them into doing it. Manipulation is not a behavior we want to model for children or have them absorb so we need to avoid it ourselves.

Therefore, if you find your attention straying from paying attention to the child to focusing on the reward, you may find that stickers and rewards are counter-productive. If you find a child insisting they want to be “paid,” it’s time to move away from rewards and re-invest in responses like Special Time that “pays attention” to the child instead of to the sticker chart.

Punishment is also not on this list. While punishment can stimulate immediate compliance, it does not work to improve children’s ability to think and manage their own behavior. A child who has been hit, shamed or blamed for off-track behavior feels less connected, less seen, and less able to function. She is therefore less able to respond in the caring, cooperative, sensible ways that she could if she did feel connected. She is less able to carry out the tasks of executive function.

Guidance policies

Each licensed child care program must have written guidance policies and you need to know where to locate yours.

- The policies state the program’s positive approach to guidance.
- The policies must also state that no one may use frightening, cruel, unusual, hazardous, or humiliating responses to children. In fact, as a mandated reporter, these kinds of actions must be reported to CPS if a caregiver witnesses them happening. They include:
 - (i) Corporal (bodily) punishment such as biting, jerking, spanking, kicking, flicking, or any other means of inflicting pain.
 - (ii) Verbal abuse such as yelling, shouting, name calling, shaming, oppressive, or derogatory remarks.
 - (iii) Using or withholding of food or drink as punishment.
 - (iv) Physical restraint injurious to the child, locked time-out room or closet for “discipline.”

You may want to think of a time when these policies would be useful. When and how would they be shared?

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance



Interactive Learning Activities

Option 1: Talking informatively (and giving up praise)

Materials Needed

- Internet access required

Choose one or more of the following video clips (listed below) to show **without** sound. Working in pairs or small groups, ask students to watch the video clip and take turns describing to the child—as if the child could hear—what the child is doing. Ask them to encourage each other to use their voices and facial expressions to show their pleasure to children while leaving out praise like, “good job” and “I’m so proud of you today.” Not using value-laden praise can be a real challenge, but it is worth trying for these few minutes.

Toddler clips

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEtnMAU3h3o&NR=1&feature=endscreen> (3:00 min. Viewing toddler girl with toys in a home environment)
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xNsKoABayo&feature=related> (1:43 min. Viewing toddler girl in toy kitchen—probably home environment)
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nQxWCn_dBg&feature=related (7:23 min following toddler boy indoors starting at slide, to car on vertical track, to marble track, to slide. This is in a center environment and there are several children. You could choose from any part of this clip—it is long.)
- <http://www.youtube.com/embed/AyBUHTILPzY> (0:25 min. viewing twin toddler girls with bin of plastic animals and box of tampons—home environment)

Preschooler clips:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3f3rOz0NzPc> (6:34 minutes. Home environment. Girl preschooler and boy toddler are building with blocks—another long one. Choose the portion you want)
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1eMm6FMUU> (2:06 minutes—Center environment, these preschool boys.)

Debrief—What did you discover from trying this?

Option 2: Using positive communication: Do’s instead of don’ts

- **Handout 4, “Using Positive Communication.”**

Divide students into pairs. Ask them to follow the instructions on the handout.

Option 3: Sharing program guidance policies

Materials Needed

- Five or more samples of child care program guidance policies
- Paper (“Critique sheets”) and pens

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance

Create stations around the room with a program guidance policy at each station. Post a critique sheet at each station. Have the students do a 15 minute “walk about” around the stations, read the policies, and record what they like, question or suggest.

Outcome C

The student will recognize behavior that has gone off track and commit to limit setting that supports self-management behavior.



Discussion Questions

1. What are some things, large or small, that you have seen that caused a child to feel disconnected?
2. How do children signal that they need help?
3. Describe the Listen, Limit, Listen process. Which step is toughest for you?
4. How have you stopped yourself or gotten help when you felt you might harm a child?



Presentation

Children like to be cooperative, helpful, generous, kind, competent, fair, loving and good friends. When they feel connected to others, this is how they function. They reach out in friendship, share easily, and solve problems. This is what we observe as a child whose executive function is working well.

Causes of disconnection

Read **Handout 5, “Causes of Disconnection,”** individually or as a group. From the handout it is obvious that the things that cause disconnection are stressful to children. When children feel stressed they can feel hurt, confused, alone, afraid, embarrassed, guilty, sad, and so on. When feeling these ways, their thinking is less flexible and clear. In turn, when they cannot think well, the feelings of hurt, isolation and confusion get intensified. It is no wonder that behavior goes off-track! Children can become hurtful, unsafe, manipulative, withdrawn, uncooperative, or easily upset when this happens. Their ability to understand explanations, logical consequences, and reasoning also gets sidetracked by their feelings of hurt. It is as if they just do not know what to do, cannot manage their behavior, and begin to act in unworkable ways. They need help to restore their sense of connection and with it, their thinking and reasoning abilities.

Off-track behavior

We use the term “off-track behavior” to describe children’s signals for help. Common terms like misbehavior, disobedience, being spoiled or being bratty all carry with them ideas about children that are inaccurate and lead to caregivers’ disappointment, upset, and the “crime and punishment” framework that we’re working to replace. Calling it “off-track behavior” instead of “misbehavior” can help us see it in a more positive light. When children feel disconnected they don’t think well, adults sometimes *feel* that children are:

“Just trying to get attention,”

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance

“Causing a power struggle,”
“Getting revenge,” or
“Just trying to avoid failure.”

But they’re not. It would be nice if the child could just say, “Help, I’m stressed. I need your help.” Instead they show us their pain by hitting, biting, or hiding under a table. This behavior is signaling that they are hurting inside and their sense of connection is broken. They need our *help* to stop and reconnect.

OFF-TRACK BEHAVIOR IS ALWAYS A SIGNAL FOR HELP.

Your response

Children count on their caregivers to notice when to lend a hand and help them stop off-track behavior. Begin by noticing:

- Is the child hungry?
- Does he need help with something that is difficult?
- Does she have a health or medical issue that needs attending to?
- Does he simply need information about how to act in the situation?

Identifying the child’s needs helps you handle these issues appropriately and restore positive functioning. Sometimes a snuggle and giggle is all a child needs to help him reconnect. Sometimes playing with play dough, or in the sensory table, or outdoors in vigorous play will help them release tension and get back on track.

If, however, the off-track behavior is rooted in big feelings of disconnection, the child’s behavior will tend to go off-track again and again. When this happens, the child is signaling that they need someone to step in, set a limit, and stay close. Setting a limit is a way to keep everyone safe while the child off-loads stress. The talking, laughter, crying, trembling or the tantrum that follows is the release-valve for pressure that had built up and made them unreasonable.

Crying is not the hurt—it is the release. Tantrums are not off-track behavior—they are the release of frustration and fear. A crying or tantruming child is a smart child who is efficiently offloading what could otherwise become toxic stress. They are doing the work of healing from the inside out.

What the child needs is for you to be relaxed, accepting, caring, and close. Keeping the child, their surroundings, and everyone safe while the child sobs or rages can be a big job. Allow this release to run its course. Know that tears and tantrums provide a straightforward route to a cooperative, happy child with markedly increased abilities to manage her own behavior.

What steps might an adult need to take in order to provide a safe environment for a child to off-load stress? The adult’s role is to continue to offer a connection, and sometimes provide containment so the child does not hurt himself, other people, or other things. This could mean keeping physically close, stopping a kick, bite or scratch,

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance

offering a lap so the child can see your eyes, or catching a child before she throws herself down and hits the floor.

Unthinking, rigid restraint is NOT listening or appropriate limit setting. The effect of rigid restraint is to get the child to shut down and stop both the behavior and the emotional release. Rigid restraint neither helps the child to offload stress nor helps him get his behavior back on track. It becomes inappropriate physical punishment. This is the opposite of providing opportunities for emotional release.

Taking care of yourself and knowing the limits of your expertise

What can you do when you are upset and cannot remember that off-track behavior is a signal for help? You might feel overwhelmed or exasperated at times, or you might unexpectedly experience unresolved hurt from your own childhood. Some of us might experience strong feelings about children's actions that arise from those childhood experiences. If you feel overwhelmed and have reactions such as: "I'm going to teach this child a lesson" or "This kid will see who's boss," or similar thoughts, STOP. Get help.

- Get help in the moment—don't try to pretend you have patience. Find a co-worker, your supervisor, the custodian. "Can you help?" is a fine thing to ask. You can help them another time when they need it.
- If you are alone with the children, slow down, call a friend, or even just sit down and try to relax on the floor. It makes you less threatening, gets you out of the tight spot you have stumbled into, and makes you accessible to the children.
- Make sparing use of time-out to protect (not to punish or "teach") the child.
- Inform yourself about resources within the community that can help the family, the child, and you. You can make use of the resources within our communities to increase the support to children and families.

(Optional: Share **Handout 7, "Knowing Your Limits."** Ask students to read when they go home. Debrief at the following class time.)

Yes, we adults need emotional release. The challenge is to find healthy releases without taking it out on children. We are important people, and working with children is very rewarding *and* very emotional work.



Interactive Learning Activities

Option 1: Setting limits role play

Materials Needed

- 3 x 5 index cards with scenarios (below) written on them
- **Handout 6, "Setting Limits"**

Actions/Scenarios:

- Jump up and down and say, "I want a snack right now!"

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance

- Kick the table, another child, or your caregiver (gently of course).
- Grab something from another child, hollering, “It’s mine!”
- Sit in your cubby, twirling your hair and sucking your thumb.
- Ask your caregiver for a toy. When s/he gives it to you, insist that you want a different one. When s/he gives the different one to you, insist it is another you want.
- Try to bite your caregiver.

To begin, pair up the group and take a partner yourself if the number is odd. Explain that they will get to try out this Setting Limits approach by taking turns role-playing a child and caregiver.

Read **Handout 6** in pairs. Have each pair decide who will be the child first and who will be the caregiver. (They will get to do both roles.)

- To the “child” in each pair: Give a scenario with instructions that they are not to be “easy.” They need to play the role of a very unreasonable, upset child who responds to their “caregiver” setting the limit by *crying or having a tantrum*. This will allow the “caregiver” to actually practice staying close and listening through a big upset.
- To the “caregiver:” Encourage them to go step-by-step through the “Listen, Limit, and Listen” process. Remind them to avoid explaining or distracting and to get close enough to actually stop the behavior. Since the “child” has been instructed to be very unreasonable, the “caregiver” may need to put a hand on or arm around the “child” to keep everyone safe. Coach the “caregivers” to persist in holding the limit and extending caring while the “child” cries or tantrums thoroughly.

Repeat, reversing the roles.

After both partners have played the role of adult and child, ask:

1. What did you notice about yourself as the caregiver? How did you feel about “your” child’s upset?
2. As the child, what did you find reassuring? What, if anything, worried you?
3. Can you remember a time when you were upset and just wished someone would listen rather than trying to “fix it” or stop your feelings?

Option 2: Teaching and learning resources

Materials Needed

- Internet access required

The Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL), Vanderbilt University, offers a wealth of teaching and learning resources. Go to: <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>. Look for videos, handouts, and activities geared for family members, children, and teachers. Hand in Hand Parenting also offers articles on a range of topics: <http://handinhandparenting.org>. Think of the questions that have come up during your class discussions. Select one resource from each site to share with the class, and encourage them to seek out more. Some suggestions include:

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance

- Describing children's actions; acknowledging positive behaviors
<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout22.pdf>
- Using "Dos" instead of "Don'ts" <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout4.pdf>
- Giving choices <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout15.pdf>
- Promoting positive peer interaction <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout5.pdf>
and <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/briefs/handout6.pdf>
- Guidance for when to seek outside help for children's behavior:
http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/dmg_seek_outside_help.pdf
- What to Do When Your Toddler Bites
<http://www.handinhandparenting.org/news/14/64/What-to-do-When-Your-Toddler-Bites>
- "It's Mine!" All About Sharing. <http://www.handinhandparenting.org/news/6/64/It-s-Mine-All-About-Sharing>
- Inoculating Our Children against Racism.
<http://www.handinhandparenting.org/news/29/64/Inoculating-Our-Children-Against-Racism>
- Biting, Pushing, and Pulling Hair: Helping Children with Aggression.
<http://www.handinhandparenting.org/news/13/64/Biting-Pushing-Pulling-Hair-Helping-Children-with-Aggression>
- Backbone and Bounce: Building Resilience:
<http://www.handinhandparenting.org/news/37/64/Backbone-and-Bounce-Building-Resilience>

Option 3: Thumbs up, thumbs down

Explain to the class that you are going to read five (5) scenarios describing child behaviors and caregiver responses. Ask participants to give a 'thumbs up' if the caregiver response is appropriate, 'thumbs down' if it's inappropriate, or a shrug if they do not know. Appropriate responses are bolded.

Scenarios:

1. It is raining and the caregivers are getting the two-year-old children ready to go outside. Aden runs to the other side of the room and starts playing with the trucks.
 - (a) Caregiver says in a loud voice, "Aden, you get over here this minute!"
 - (b) **Caregiver asks, "Aden, do you want to wear your raincoat or your hoody?"**
 - (c) Caregiver grabs Aden and carries him outside.
 - (d) Caregiver asks, "Aden, do you want to get your coat on?"
2. Two seven-year-olds are fighting over the same toy.
 - (a) Caregiver says, "He had it first; you go find something else."
 - (b) Caregiver takes the toy away and says, "If you two can't share then neither of you is going to play with it!"
 - (c) **Caregiver gets on their level and asks each of the children in turn, "What's happening?" S/he listens to each of them one at a time, helping**

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance

- them to not interrupt each other. Caregiver repeats this process as many times as it takes till the children come up with their own solution.
- (d) Caregiver sends each child to stand in a corner to think about how selfish they are.
3. A child spills milk at the lunch table.
- (a) Caregiver asks, "Why can't you be more careful?"
- (b) Caregiver cleans up the mess and keeps eating.
- (c) Caregiver says, "The sponge is right here. Would you like to clean it up yourself or would you like help?"**
- (d) Caregiver prevents child from getting anything more to drink for lunch.
4. Candace is an angry five-year-old who goes into the housekeeping area and throws dolls and toys all over the floor.
- (a) Caregiver says, "You pick up those toys *right now!*"
- (b) Child is not allowed in the housekeeping area for the rest of the week.
- (c) Caregiver goes calmly but quickly over to Candace and says, "You need to stop throwing things now," while looking right in her eyes. Caregiver stays close while Candace bursts into tears and starts thrashing about, holds her gently but firmly so she cannot hurt either of them. When the tears are spent, Caregiver asks if Candace wants to clean up by herself or wants help.**
- (d) Caregiver finds herself getting angry, but instead of shouting, blaming or shaming, she takes Candace's hand and walks over to her co-worker saying, "Candace and I need your help. She was throwing things, and I am angry." The other caregiver takes charge of Candace, while the first takes over the project her co-worker was supervising.**
5. Two children start climbing on the art table to reach for a mobile of seashells hanging from the ceiling.
- (a) Caregiver says, "Feet stay on the floor, you two. How can I help you?"**
- (b) Caregiver says, "You know better than that. Quit climbing on that table."
- (c) The children are removed from the art area.
- (d) Caregiver takes down the mobile and turns it into a shell display for the children to touch and explore with magnifying glasses and books from the library about shells.**



Closing Activity

Ask participants to share, in turn, one thing that they found useful or interesting about this module.



Assessment of Learning

Have students take the quiz on **Handout 8, "Check for Understanding."**

Listening to Build Connection

Listening is a way that people of all ages, races, genders, abilities, languages, etc. build connections with each other. Take some time to focus on listening.

The *listener's* job is to listen to their partner in a relaxed way with:

- Attention
- Warmth
- Respect
- Your eyes available* in case your partner looks to see if you are listening (They may not look. Please don't try to make them look. You just want your eyes available in case they do.)

Remember, as you *listen*--

- *You* are important as a listener.
- Your partner is smart.
- Give no advice.
- Maintain confidentiality, no matter how trivial what they are sharing may seem to you.

As a listener you can sit back, relax, and listen with full attention. Don't worry about what you will talk about when it is your turn. And don't interrupt—remember, you will get your turn. In some cultures, insisting on a turn or making eye contact is disrespectful. Eye contact is not required; however, consider that in every culture, young children try to get their adults to listen with their eyes as well as their ears. This is an opportunity to practice talking as if with a child who wants and needs our eye contact.

Later today or tomorrow, notice what happens when you calmly listen without interruption to someone for 5 minutes.

After the time is up, your instructor will ask you to switch roles. With the same partner, the listener is now the talker while the one who was talking becomes the listener. Again the listener relaxes and listens to the one who is talking.

Debrief together--

- How did this focused way of listening differ from your conversation earlier?
- How do you think a small child would respond to being listened to with warm, full attention?

Special Time

Special Time is a kind of “time in” that builds connection with a child.

It is an activity during which you as an adult put a child in full charge of your mutual relationship, as far as the child can think*.

- For a specific period of time (it could be anywhere from one minute to a full hour) you tell the child it is his/her special time, and let him know that you are willing to do anything the child wants to do.
- You focus your entire attention on the child and follow his or her lead, whether the child tells or simply shows you what she or he wants to do.
- During Special Time, you don't try to “improve,” to teach, or to otherwise modify what the child signals, but enthusiastically attempt to follow his/her lead for the specified time. When the period of time is up, let the child know that this Special Time is over.
- What a child chooses will help you see what s/he loves and what s/he wants. This is very important communication for you to receive. When the child can show you what s/he loves, and you pay warm attention, s/he feels closer and more securely connected to you.

*If the child wants to do something hurtful, harmful, or unethical, the child is not thinking well, and you must use your judgment to keep the situation safe. That is why the stipulation is that the “child is in full charge...as far as the child can think.” As the adult, you must never give up your independent perspective on what is safe.

Positive Responses that Guide Children

1. **Describe** children's actions

- i. Simply *describing what you see a child doing* helps that child:
 1. Feel seen, cared about, and heard.
 - a. It is generally more effective than praise.
 - b. It is specific, unique to them, and interesting.
 - c. Works best if you are describing actions that you value.
 2. Increase their vocabulary and ability to use language. It can also be a way to introduce tribal or other languages:
 - a. "You are putting your coat away"
 - b. "You are using walking feet."
 - c. "Sandy is tromping to breakfast."
 - d. "You climbed really high on the climber!"
 - e. "You are cuddling the stuffed *schetwen*."
- ii. *Narrating conflicts*
 1. Can help slow down the action
 2. Gives children the opportunity to think and solve the problem.
 3. Example might go something like this when Sue and Darrel are both pulling on the red truck: Caregiver says, "Sue wants the red truck...Darrel is pulling hard on the red truck (while caregiver hangs on too)...Sue is grunting and frowning...Darrel is watching Sue...Darrel let go and got the green truck. Sue, when you are done, you can let Darrel know so he can have a turn" Caregiver lets go too.

2. **Do's instead of Don'ts**

- i. Putting things in the positive creates a positive atmosphere in the room. For example, "Use walking feet," instead of, "Don't run!"
- ii. Linguistically, children hear the ends of sentences and respond to what they hear:
 1. When you say, "Don't throw that block," they tend to hear, "...throw that block."
 2. When you make the ending say what you want them to do—"Put the block down"—they tend to hear, "...block down."
- iii. Another technique is to state what you want them to do in "-ing" words. For instance, instead of saying, "Don't run" or even "Please walk," you could say, "Walking."

3. **Time in:** Group environments can be overwhelming. As you observe, notice if a child is having difficulty and is getting upset or frustrated.

- i. Help her by moving her away from the group and offering a hand.
- ii. Give a child positive connection through one-on-one time to avoid problems later.
 1. For example, "I need a helper. Can you help me?"
 2. "Would you like to read with me?"
 3. "We could do a Special Time right now. We can do whatever you want for 3 minutes" (or 5 or 15 or however long you know you can devote to it), then follow the child's lead for the designated time. Say, "Thank you for our Special Time" when the time is up.

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance

4. **Aware touch**

- i. Everyone needs human touch that conveys nurturing and support—a hug, a pat on the back, cuddling a baby, rubbing a back at rest time.
- ii. Your touches can convey your kind regard as you guide a child.
- iii. Touch can be used to protect a child or others from danger. Examples are:
 - 1. Putting your hand on a child's arm to suggest slowing down.
 - 2. Asking a child to hold your hand during transition or when moving from one area of the building to another.
 - 3. Placing your hand on a child's hand to keep the child from hitting someone or throwing something.

5. Give Choices--Offer choices you are comfortable with children making. Like everyone, children like to have a say in what they do. Making choices promotes executive function.

- i. "I can see that you are not through playing yet, Sadie. Would you like to put that over here and finish after lunch, or take two more minutes before washing your hands for lunch?"
- ii. "Mikhail has the red marker now. Would you like this green one or this blue one till he is finished with the red?"

6. **Redirect** by giving a child alternatives to their current behavior

- i. Example: "James is sitting there, Joey. You need to pick another place to sit."
- ii. "Michi, you have so much energy, but running is for outside. No one is at the water table right now. Let's play over there."

7. Time out is really for *you* to get a break when you cannot think anymore. (Use a soft, cozy place like an easy chair with pillows for the child)

- i. Time out is not to be used as a punishment.
- ii. A good rule of thumb--1 minute per year of child's age (and time out is not appropriate before 3 years old).
- iii. Time out doesn't solve the problem but can get the child out of harm's way, including from your angry response.
- iv. If you find you are using time-out often, it's time to invest in more "time in" (above) or set limits and allow for emotional release (see "Setting limits" handout).

8. **Support positive peer interaction.**

- i. Provide cues and prompts to help children learn how to interact positively.
- ii. Describe children's peer interactions to them as acknowledgment and reinforcement.

Summary list:

- 1. Describing children's actions
- 2. Dos instead of Don'ts
- 3. Time in
- 4. Aware touch
- 5. Give choices
- 6. Redirect
- 7. Time out
- 8. Support positive peer interaction

Using Positive Communication

The following are common responses to children's behavior. With your partner, read each and come up with a positive replacement.

Common Responses	Positive Replacements
"Don't just drop your coat on the floor."	
"Stop running around the room."	
"Quit hitting! Bad boy!"	
"Stop climbing on the table."	
"Why are you so slow?"	
"Stop that screeching noise."	
"Please quit whining."	
"You don't get to take all the play-doh."	
"Okay, who tore up the snack mat?"	
"Why can't you share?"	

Once you have turned these into statements that are positive and that would tell a child what you do want them to do, find another pair to debrief with.

Where do you agree? Disagree? Explain your thinking to one another. Agreement is not necessary—but discussion is.

Causes of Disconnection

A child feels disconnected because she or he:

- *Does not feel well* or is hungry, sick, or tired.
- *Lacks knowledge or experience* (the social situation is culturally different from their own; the non-verbal or verbal cues are unfamiliar to them).
- *Is feeling left out or rejected* (there is a new baby in the house; mom has a new boyfriend; cell phone/Facebook/paperwork is occupying adult's attention; the child's mom is also her caregiver at school, and child feels as if "Mommy is with the other kids more than me").
- *Is feeling scared* (parents are fighting; the child saw a scary movie or watched TV news; someone threatened them, yelled at, or hit them; a parent is intoxicated).
- *Is sad or bereaved* (there was a death in the family; a parent was incarcerated or deployed; a favorite pet died; their parent dropped them off at day care; they were moved to a new room or school).
- *Feels discouraged* (no one came to meet their needs when they called out or cried; financial worries plague the family; parents have separated or divorced).
- *Feels humiliated* (someone made fun of them; put them in a playpen or high chair when they are too old for it; acted dismissive or said derogatory things about their family, racial group, family structure, gender, abilities/disabilities, etc.).
- *Feels physically hurt* (someone hit them, slapped their hand, spanked them; they fell and got hurt; they got a shot).

Disconnection makes children feel alone and hurt. Behavior goes off track. Children need us to help them re-connect.

Setting Limits with Young Children

When children are under stress they lose their patience, their love of fun, and their easygoing ability to make each day a good one. At these times, they tend to do things that don't make sense. They'll begin to squabble, to insist on having things someone else has, or to want one thing after another, without gaining satisfaction.

At times like these, caregivers can play a very positive role. We can *set limits* on children's behavior in order to help them relieve the stress they are under and regain their innate good judgment and joy in cooperation. When you think a child is being unreasonable, here are three (3) steps to follow:

Listen

Get down so you are at eye level, and simply ask, "What's going on?" Ask the child to tell you why she is yelling, or why she has to have the blue cup that Tommy has. She needs to talk about the upset she feels, if possible, to someone who isn't upset too.

Limit

If she is insisting on unreasonable behavior, you must step in. Tell her what you think is reasonable, and then make sure that her unreasonable behavior doesn't continue. If the child is yelling at her friend, ask her to stop. If she can't stop, pick her up gently and bring her with you into another area of the room. If she's throwing toys, put your hand on the toy she's about to throw, and say, "I won't let you throw that." If she is insisting on amassing all the play dough for herself, bring her into your lap, away from the play dough, and tell her, "Not all of it. The others want some too." No punishment is needed, no lectures are needed, and no harshness is needed. Simply step in. Children who are under stress can't think well. They can't process what we tell them, so they don't do what we ask. You must expect this, and step in, gently but firmly, to see that they don't continue to do irrational things.

Listen

This is the "stress release" step—the one that will help the child immensely. After you have stepped in to prevent the child from doing things that don't make sense, she will most likely begin to cry, storm, or tantrum. This is constructive. It is the child's way of getting rid of the tension that made her unreasonable in the first place. If you can stay close while she cries or storms, she will continue until she has regained her ability to listen, to be cooperative, and to make the best of the situation at hand.

Adapted with permission from Hand in Hand Parenting. www.handinhandparenting.org

Knowing Your Limits

After a storm of feelings in the arms of a trusted adult, children once again manage their own behavior. They can solve problems, play well with friends, satisfy their curiosity about bugs and worms, and contribute ideas at circle time.

However, listening can be difficult for us as adults. After all, most adults were not listened to with this kind of caring attention when we were upset.

Getting Help

1. **Sometimes** a child will keep crying or tantruming longer than you have the resource or time for.
 - a. At these times, helping them to get their attention out onto the interesting environment and activities will be necessary.
 - b. Give them information about what is next. Through loud crying, children can hear when you say, “We need to get ready to wash hands for lunch in 5 minutes,” or “I need to go on my break in 3 minutes.”
2. **What happens if you start to “lose it?”**
 - a. Anytime you find you are impatient, getting upset, or angry, it is time to stop.
 - b. You can say something like, “I care about you and am not sure what to do right now, so we are going to find something else to do,” and then do so.
3. **If you don’t have the time and resource** to listen to emotional release on any given day, don’t worry. The child will try again. S/he doesn’t want to carry around the hurts any longer than necessary.
 - a. Rigid patterns of behavior can help you know when it is going to happen again. It helps to *plan ahead*
 - i. Ask the parent to come a bit early for an extended goodbye so the child can offload feelings of separation with the parent and you there.
 - ii. Plan with another member of your teaching team for the time of day or circumstance when the pattern of behavior occurs. Be ready to set the limit as soon as it happens.
 - b. Rebuilding connection through emotional release will begin to replace the pattern with rational, flexible behavior.
4. **Seek outside help**, making sure the family is central to the process. Use community resources—“It takes a village to raise a child.”
 - a. Social service agencies
 - b. Physician

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance

- c. Public health nurse
- d. School district special services
- e. Child protective services
- f. Special needs
- g. Others

5. Find your own emotional release: “When YOU become overwhelmed and drained, seek the counsel of a supportive friend or co-worker. Find someone you trust who will just listen and can give you the release you need to face the next day with an optimistic attitude.”*

*“From Exchange Everyday’ daily online article for September 5, 2012:

"Responding Professionally and Compassionately to Challenging Behavior" by Karen Stephens is the lead article in the **Beginnings Workshop** unit, "When Children are Difficult"

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance

Handout 8

☒ Check for Understanding (10 Points)

1. True/False: Secure relationships are vital to children.
2. True/False: Listening builds connections between people.
3. To provide quality care, individuals are:
 - a. Respectful to children, families and staff
 - b. Impatient
 - c. Unethical
 - d. Dishonest
4. Modeling the behavior you want to see in children is / is not an important way to help children learn how you expect them to act.
5. True/False: As long as adults are nurturing toward children, it doesn't matter how rudely they act toward one another.
6. True/False: Special Time can help a tense child relax and be less likely to have off-track behavior.
7. True/False: A response is what we do after a child has done something / or in answer to a child's actions.
8. True/False: Describing an action that you appreciate (such as "You put your coat in your cubby!") is more useful to a child than using judgmental words like "good job," or "good girl/boy."
9. True/False: It is more effective to use positive communication with children than negative. Getting into the habit of saying what *to* do instead of what *not* to do is a useful guidance tool.
10. True/False: Punishment doesn't really work as a guidance strategy. Things like shaming, spanking, and blaming make a child feel *less* connected and they don't help children manage their own behavior.
11. True/False: Every child care program must have written guidance policies that expressly rule out frightening, cruel, unusual, hazardous, or humiliating responses to children.
12. True/False: Stickers and rewards should be used extensively so children will learn to work for low wages.
13. A child's off-track behavior like biting or hitting is:

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance

- a. always a signal for help
 - b. an indication that they feel disconnected
 - c. a reason to set a limit
 - d. all of the above
14. True/False: Emotional release through tears and tantrums helps children rid themselves of stress.
15. True/False: Caregivers should always do everything for the child and family, resisting the urge to get help for things they don't understand or do not have the expertise for.
16. True/False: Adults who work with children can experience strong feelings about children's actions that arise from their own childhood experiences.
17. When unresolved hurts from her childhood results in a caregiver feeling angry toward a child for that child's off-track behavior, the caregiver should:
- a. Quit her job.
 - b. Tell the child, "You make me so mad!"
 - c. Get help from a co-worker to keep from taking out her anger on the child, or sit down on the floor if she is the only adult around.
 - d. Call the child's mother and tell her, "I can't spank her so you need to tonight."
18. True/False: Caregiving is emotional work so caregivers benefit by setting up times to release their own tension through talking and sharing feelings with a trusted friend.
19. True/False: Time out is a way to keep from harming a child, and should not be used as punishment.
20. Guidance includes:
- a. How we treat children with listening, warmth, respect, and how we set up environments and activities that nurture their interests and love of learning.
 - b. How we respond to children in ways that are positive, descriptive of behaviors we see that we like, re-directive away from negative behaviors and toward behaviors we value, and descriptive of what we want them to do instead of what we don't want them to do.
 - c. How we set limits when their behavior goes off track to stop the behavior, and how we listen to any upset that might follow.
 - d. All of the above.

Module 8: Interactions and Guidance

☒ Check for Understanding (Answer Key)

1. True
2. True
3. a
4. is
5. False
6. True
7. True
8. True
9. True
10. True
11. True
12. False
13. d
14. True
15. False
16. True
17. c
18. True
19. True
20. d